



COMMISSION  
OF THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

WE/21/92  
28 May 1992

Andriessen in US. Following his declared intention to press for a rapid solution to the Uruguay round of the GATT talks, Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen is now in Washington for discussions on the latest compromise proposals with US Secretary of State James Baker. The EC hopes that last week's breakthrough on CAP reform will persuade the US to take a more flexible stance. This is the first time that Baker has been personally involved in the talks.

Charlemagne Prize. Commission President Jacques Delors received the 1992 Charlemagne Prize in the city of Aachen today (Thursday). In his speech of acceptance, Delors called for a grand debate around the Maastricht Treaty. The upheavals in eastern Europe provided the EC with the opportunity to create a wide united Europe and offer durable peace, he said. "Our Community, guardian of stability, provides the anchor point for the reconstruction of our Continent."

Delors goes East. Delors is to make an official visit to Moscow this weekend to open discussions on the future development of EC-Russian relations. He will continue on to Poland to be joined by Commissioners Jean Dondelinger and Filippo Maria Pandolfi for a conference on "Law and Democracy" in Poznan on Tuesday. The conference of academics will examine various constitutional and institutional routes for securing a peaceful and democratic continent of Europe. This is the first of four similar assemblies to take place throughout Europe shortly. The next conference in Salamanca will look at the problems of Southern Europe.

Switzerland applies. On Tuesday Switzerland joined its fellow EFTA members Austria, Sweden and Finland by depositing its formal application to join the European Community. The Helvetic Confederation, with a population of around 7 million, is the seventh official EC applicant. Switzerland has stated it sees no problem in reconciling its neutrality with membership of the Community.

Environment impasse. Environment Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana announced on Wednesday that he was refusing to go to the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro starting next Monday. He told a press conference of his disappointment at the failure of Ministers to agree on measures to reduce global warming and other matters. He added, however, that his personal viewpoint should not prevent the Commission from nominating some other representative if they so wished. Ripa di Meana said he had reached his decision after evaluating the whole of the conference. He said it seemed "everything or virtually everything" had been arranged in advance, whereas he believed in an environmental policy "based on binding obligations and precise undertakings, not on words". Another set-back prior to Rio was the lack of progress in the Council on the proposal for Member States to pledge 0.7% of Community GDP to promote sustainable development in poorer countries.

Population explosion. A report prepared for the Commission forecasts a doubling of world population to over 10 billion people. More than nine tenths of future growth would occur in developing countries, precisely the nations least able to accommodate such a large increase in numbers. The report was prepared ahead of the Rio conference at the request of Commissioner Ripa di Meana.

Spring economic forecast. The latest Commission forecast just released shows a scaling down of growth prospects to about 1.75%. The Community is characterised by slow economic growth, deteriorating employment conditions, insufficient progress towards price stability and little progress towards sounder public finances. A gradual strengthening of world economic activity is forecast for 1993.

Competition by another name. Joint ventures between companies seeking to strengthen their market position by collaborating in such areas as R&D and distribution will find themselves under increased scrutiny from the EC's competition task force. Competition Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan, addressing an international cartel conference in Berlin on Monday, warned that "strategic alliances" would not be permitted between competitors if they resulted simply in an economic gain to the companies using cartels. The prerequisite for licencing such ventures had to be a technological gain, an expansion of output or a gain in efficiency. Any joint production should not exceed 20% of the total market.

UK regions funded. Scotland and Wales are to benefit further from EC structural funds. Tayside will receive £8m (11.3m ECUs) from the regional development fund over the next two years to invest in much-needed job creation schemes. The money will be matched by a commitment of £13m from central and local government and a further £3.5m from private companies. Funds for Wales will finance two integrated development programmes with £74.5m going to the South and £21.8m aiding Clwyd in the North. Regional development Commissioner Bruce Millan welcomed the allocations saying that Tayside had suffered greatly from population decline and unemployment and that Wales was still suffering the problems of industrial restructuring after the decline of the coal and steel industries. Both countries have earmarked the funds for similar initiatives: to improve transport; develop new industrial sites; provide technological and administrative support for small and medium-sized enterprises; and enhance coastal areas and tourist attractions, such as this year's National Garden Festival in Ebbw Vale.

Chunnel region to gain. Channel tunnel areas of Kent have been allocated £15.4m from the EC's INTERREG programme which provides grants and loans to deal with the problems inherent in the Community's border regions. Announcing the funding, Commissioner Millan said that the potential of cross-border economic activity to improve the quality of life for those straddling EC borders was only just beginning to be tapped. The neighbouring French region, Nord/Pas-de-Calais, and Kent County Council had already done much pioneering work in developing cooperation in a wide "Transmanche Euroregion", now to include three Belgian regions. The INTERREG funds will promote further economic cooperation on both sides of the Channel, particularly among small firms, as well as improving transport, encouraging environmental collaboration and tourism.

BRITE/EURAM conference. Opening the EC BRITE/EURAM conference in Seville on Monday, R&D Commissioner Filippo Maria Pandolfi said that the "Achilles heel" of the Europeans was their difficulty in turning technological innovation into commercial success. Some 800 industrial academics, researchers and policy-makers heard how the EC's BRITE/EURAM joint research programmes offered an ideal framework for producers of high-tech to liaise with end users thereby ensuring that manufactured goods match the market. The Commissioner, stressing the need for small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in R&D investment, announced a new "European Fund" to shoulder some of the financial burden. The current programme, with a budget of 670m ECUs (£470m), covers materials and raw materials, design and manufacturing and aeronautics.

No to smoking. Seventeen out of every twenty people polled for a survey commissioned by the EC's Europe Against Cancer programme said they were in favour of smoking restrictions at work. The poll, linked to the current EC Year of Health and Safety at Work, shows that even a majority of smokers would be happy to break the habit at work to protect colleagues from illnesses related to "passive-smoking." The report concludes that despite heavy advertising campaigns and other pressures on public opinion, Europeans are fully aware of the dangers of smoking and in favour of protecting non-smokers.

Drug prevention week. Following the European Council's decision to stage a European Drug Prevention Week from 16-22 November, the UK Secretary of State for Health Virginia Bottomley announced that as part of its Presidency the UK would host a two-day awareness conference during the week. She expressed delight that the UK's proposal was enthusiastically taken up by the other Member States. European Drug Prevention Week would mark the start of close and lasting cooperation between EC in the prevention of drug misuse, she said. Events during the week would focus on young people and their parents, a crucially important audience.

Letter to car producers. As promised earlier this month after publication of the Commission's two detailed reports on the car industry, Competition Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan has written to all car producers in the Community requesting their compliance with the EC action plan to reduce car price differentials. Sir Leon urges manufacturers and dealers to act as quickly as possible as a duty not only to the consumer, but also to themselves. All car producers are urged to write to their dealers assuring them that their orders will be honoured at basic prices. Dealers must be certain that they are free to sell cars on to intermediaries and dealers elsewhere in the Community. The Commission wishes to restore public confidence by getting producers to review pricing policies.

#### Conference and Diary Dates.

**Speaking for Europe** - Leading speakers with wide European experience address key issues facing the new Europe in a series of talks every Wednesday starting at 1pm in St. Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square. The London correspondent of Der Spiegel speaks on 10 June. Tel: 071 930 0089.

**Social Europe** - An all-day training seminar on employment, housing, immigration etc at Thamesdown Community Law Centre, Swindon on 3 June. For bookings tel: 0793 486926.

<b>Council Meetings:</b>	Education	1 June	Luxembourg
	"Round table" Transport	1-2 June	Lisbon
	UN Earth Summit	1-12 June	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
	Tourism	4 June	Luxembourg

**Our next briefing will take place on Thursday 4 June at 11.30 am.**